

Commissioner Deborah A. Gist's Weekly Field Memo
Friday, December 4th, 2009

From Commissioner Gist:

[Meeting](#) scheduled on Race to the Top application

**From the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
(RIDE):**

[Workshops](#) scheduled on criteria regarding identifying students with specific learning disabilities

RIDE seeking [proposals](#) for alternative-certification programs

[HOUSSE](#) plans may no longer be used to determine that teachers are highly qualified

From federal agencies:

U.S. [Census](#) Bureau prepares program materials

Other:

[Grants](#) available for work on school-college partnerships

Rhode Island Bar Association invites schools to participate in 2010
[Rhode Island Law Day](#)

Note from Commissioner Gist

Meeting scheduled on Race to the Top application

It has been wonderful to see so many of you at our community forums on the Rhode Island Race to the Top application. The forums have been a big success, as we have received lots of excellent feedback from educators and families in many school districts and we are also building strong public support for our reform agenda and for our Race to the Top application.

I have scheduled a superintendents' meeting on Race to the Top, to be held on:

Thursday, December 17th

9 to 10:30 a.m.

Center for School Leadership, Building 6, Rhode Island College

At this meeting, we will discuss the specifics of our Race to the Top application and I will review with you the funding support that Race to the Top could bring to LEAs as well as the opportunities for districts to sign on as partners, either as "participating districts," which will require a signed MOU and significant buy-in at the local level, or as "involved districts."

I am looking forward to sharing ideas with you at this meeting.

From RIDE:

Workshops scheduled on criteria regarding identifying students with specific learning disabilities

Please see this message from the RIDE Office for Diverse Learners:

The State Criteria for Specific Learning Disabilities were adopted by the Board of Regents June 4, 2009. These criteria phase in the requirement for LEAs to utilize a student's response to intervention (RTI) as part of the process for identifying students with specific learning disabilities and phase out the utilizing a discrepancy model . Beginning September 1, 2010, the use of response to intervention as part of the process for determining eligibility for special education under the category of specific learning disability will be required in all elementary schools in Rhode Island. Under the criteria adopted by the Board of Regents, districts can apply for a waiver to delay the requirement for using this process for up to one year. Any district that does not have reliable and valid systems in place to utilize RTI as part of the eligibility determination process for specific learning disabilities in all elementary schools should apply for a waiver.

In order to assist districts in utilizing the new criteria we will be offering an *Overview of the R.I. Criteria for Specific Learning Disabilities*. This training will be offered several times during January and February. This training is designed for educators who participate in special education eligibility team meetings. The purpose of this training is to provide an overview of the criteria for specific learning disabilities and guidance document. A schedule of the trainings and registration information is below.

For questions or more information about the R.I. Criteria for Specific Learning Disabilities or these trainings, please contact Phyllis Lynch, phyllis.lynch@ride.ri.gov or 222-4693 or Kristen Matthes, kristen.matthes@ride.ri.gov or 222-5104.

Overview of the RI Criteria for Specific Learning Disabilities Training Schedule

Date	Time	Location
January 14, 2010	8:30-11:30 AM	West Bay Educational Collaborative
January 14, 2010	3:00-6:00 PM	Southern RI Collaborative
January 20, 2010	3:00-6:00 PM	Coventry School Committee Room
January 21, 2010	8:30-11:30 AM	East Bay Educational Collaborative
January 21, 2010	3:00-6:00 PM	Northern RI Collaborative
January 26, 2010	8:30-11:30 AM	Northern RI Collaborative
January 28, 2010	8:30-11:30 AM	Coventry School Committee Room
February 5, 2010	8:30-11:30 AM	Northern RI Collaborative
February 9, 2010	3:00-6:00 PM	East Bay Educational Collaborative
February 12, 2010	8:30-11:30 AM	Southern RI Collaborative

Registration Information

To help us prepare for these workshops, please register **one week before** the workshop. Follow these directions to register:

1. Go to the RIDE website - www.ride.ri.gov.
2. Click on the calendar tab at the bottom of the page.
3. Click on "Open full calendar."
4. Use the arrow pointing to the right to move to month of the training you would like to attend.
5. Click on the title of the workshop on the day of the workshop you would like to attend
6. A new window with details on the workshop will open. Click on register now.

7. When a new window opens, click on Register.
8. Enter your eRIDE User ID and password. If you do not have an eRIDE account you will need to create one.
9. Click on Register on the top right.

Training Location Information

West Bay Educational Collaborative
144 Bignall St
Warwick, RI 02888

Coventry School Committee Room
1675 Flat River Road
Coventry, RI 02816

Southern RI Collaborative
646 Camp Avenue
North Kingstown, RI
Directions:

<http://www.ri.net/sorico/about/directions.html>

East Bay Educational Collaborative
317 Market Street
Warren, Rhode Island 02885
Directions:

<http://www.ebecri.org/custom/directions.html>

Northern RI Collaborative
640 George Washington Highway, Suite 200
Lincoln, RI 02865
Directions: [http://www.nric-ri.org/files/uploads/Directions to NRIC New Main Office_09.pdf](http://www.nric-ri.org/files/uploads/Directions_to_NRIC_New_Main_Office_09.pdf)

We will send this communication to all assistant superintendents, administrators of special education, and principals.

RIDE seeking proposals for alternative-certification programs

In November 2008, the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education adopted the R.I. Standards for Alternative Certification Programs. As adopted, the standards permit local education agencies and nonprofit agencies to develop alternative-certification routes that must undergo state approval.

RIDE welcomes proposals from local education agencies and nonprofit organizations that wish to develop post-baccalaureate, non-degree educator-preparation programs that lead to state certification for program completers. Districts should submit a letter of interest to the Office of Educator Quality and

Certification by February 1, 2010, if they wish to propose a certification program for the 2010-11 school year.

Please refer to the RIDE Web site:

http://ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/Teacher_Prep/default.aspx, for information regarding *The R.I. Program Approval Guidelines and Standards and the R.I. Standards for Alternative Certification Programs*, and contact Paulajo Gaines for more information.

HOUSSE plans may no longer be used to determine that teachers are highly qualified

I want to provide complete clarity on the expectations for meeting the Highly Qualified Teacher requirement. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001 specifies that districts must hire *and* place only Highly Qualified teachers in assignments for all core academic subjects.*

Beginning in 2003, districts could ensure this status through two options – option 1, academic major, advanced degree, National Board certification, or content testing; or option 2, completing the Rhode Island HOUSSE rubric. Teachers who could not be confirmed as Highly Qualified through either option were required to initiate a remediation plan to become Highly Qualified that would be supported by the use of Title II, Part A, funds and be monitored by the district.

With the start of the 2009-10 school year, the HOUSSE rubric and process is no longer an available option for districts to use to ensure teachers' Highly Qualified status. All newly hired teachers of core academic subjects **must** be Highly Qualified through either an academic major or the appropriate content tests. All veteran teachers of core academic subjects **must already be** Highly

Qualified for that assignment before they are placed or seek such an assignment; districts and teachers may no longer initiate new HOUSSE plans. (Teachers enrolled currently in district-monitored HOUSSE plans may continue to work with the district to complete these plans by June 30, 2010.)

Please contact Paulajo Gaines, in the Office of Educator Quality and Certification, with any questions you may have.

*Core academic subjects - the arts, English (reading and language arts), history (civics, economics, geography, and government), world languages, mathematics, and science

Federal agencies:

U.S. Census Bureau prepares program materials

The U.S. Census Bureau has prepared a packet of program materials for schools to use. The materials, “2010 Census: It’s about us,” are available at:

<http://www.census.gov/schools/>

Other:

Grants available for work on school-college partnerships

The Rhode Island Campus Compact will award up to 10 grants of \$500 to educators to develop school-college partnerships that focus on college access or readiness. The application deadline is December 14th. For further information, see:

http://www.compact.org/ricompact/include/docs/PFSmini_grant.doc

Rhode Island Bar Association invites schools to participate in 2010 Rhode Island Law Day

RIDE will send the following notice, along with a sign-up form, to all secondary-school principals:

Dear Rhode Island Educator:

Every year, thousands of Rhode Island students, teachers, judges and lawyers share important law related education lessons on Law Day, and we hope you will participate this year. The 2010 Rhode Island Law Day is scheduled for **Friday, April 30, 2010.**

The 2010 Rhode Island Law Day Classroom Program topics enhance curriculum and help meet educational goals. Rhode Island Law Day classroom program lessons are open to Rhode Island middle and upper school, 7th to 12th grade classes, and feature the in-school participation of a Rhode Island judge and lawyer team. To promote active student participation and the best possible educational experience, the 2010 Rhode Island Law Day programs include supporting information to prepare students for the lesson and program. The Rhode Island Law Day Committee (RILDC) is offering three lesson choices and related information aimed at soliciting student opinions, surfacing the legal issues relating to the topics, and reviewing the role of judges and lawyers in addressing these issues:

1) Downloading copyrighted music: Downloading copyrighted music from the Internet without paying for it is illegal. The penalties for this crime range from up to 3 years imprisonment and \$250,000 in fines and up to six years in prison for repeat offenders.

2) Posting personal information & cyber bullying on the Internet: Posting personal information on the Internet is legal. However, posting personal information may allow others to access information that may be used to commit a crime. Cyber bullying via the Internet or through cell telephone text messages is illegal. It is a federal crime to anonymously annoy, abuse, threaten or harass any person via the internet or telecommunication system.

3) Sexting: Sexting is the use of cell telephones and computers to send nude and/or sexually explicit photographs. Sending or possessing nude or sexually explicit photographs of children under 17 violates child pornography laws which carry severe legal penalties, including jail sentences, for manufacturing, disseminating or possessing child pornography.

4) As an alternative, if you have another lesson topic related to juvenile justice or in some other area of the law you would like to address, we will work with you to accommodate your request.

Schools may schedule no more than two back-to-back classroom presentations.

For the past eight years, the RILDC has sponsored the Rhode Island Law Day Essay Contest for all 10th and 11th grade

students attending school in Rhode Island. Essay topics are the same as those for the Law Day classroom programs noted above. If you are interested in participating please check the box on the attached registration form.

We look forward to working with you and your students!

Frederick D. Massie
Director of Communications
Bar Journal Editor
Rhode Island Bar Association
115 Cedar Street
Providence, RI 02903
Telephone: 401-421-5740 x 108
Fax: 401-421-2703
Email: fmassie@ribar.com
www.ribar.com